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Law School Report



The D.C. connection

Washington alumni help our law students

A homegrown effort to build UB Law School's presence in Washington, D.C., with its thriving legal community in private practice and government service, is growing as alumni meet to plan and network.

The Washington, D.C., Leadership Board comprises a core group of UB Law alumni. In concert with Deborah J.

Scott, vice dean for development, and James R. Newton, associate dean for national outreach and strategic planning, the board is working to build a network of contacts in the D.C. legal community, to grow awareness among the law students as a place to practice, and create a mentoring program for students interested in law firm, corporate or government agency placements.

"If we can make any difference, it is to give folks a sense of the breadth and spectrum of different opportunities down here in D.C. that they might not otherwise have in other areas," said Joseph A. Kresse '95, an associate practicing pharmaceutical litigation at the Washington law firm Covington & Burling. "Also," he said, "if students want to work for a specific agency, maybe we can find some contacts who can give them a little better sense of what it is like to do that kind of work."

Kresse and Judith B. Ittig '71, a partner in the construction law firm Ittig & Ittig, have been principals in organizing the Leadership Board, which met most recently in early November. So far, said Ittig, the group is composed entirely of alumni in private practice. "We talked about identifying people we know who work in government or the non-profit sector, or in private corporations other than a private law practice, so we can broaden out the range of opportu-



Judith B. Ittig '71



Joseph A. Kresse '95

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nities we are able to help students connect with," Ittig said.

"Our initial efforts attracted a core group of people who then extended themselves to meet other alums in the D.C. area," she said. "We want to extend further into areas of service to the Law School and its development efforts, and in service to alums in the area, too."

Much of the recent meeting, Kresse and Ittig said, revolved around how they might help UB Law students identify legal positions in Washington, including summer internships and clerkships, and how to help students connect with those with the authority to hire them. "We talked about ways we could help the law students with entries to the hiring committees and to the people who are doing most of the interviewing," Ittig said.

"We were thinking about the usual structured approach to applying for a position and how we could help – not only with our own direct contacts, but with other things we can advise students about, such as how best to present themselves and what they should be doing to prepare for the various opportunities that might come up."

Added Kresse: "We are still in the

process of developing a group broad enough and wide enough so we can provide a worthwhile resource. It is a vibrant market for recent law grads, and a lot of recent grads from law schools throughout the country are finding work here."

Besides introducing students to the Washington legal community, the board also wants to make that community more aware of UB Law School, raising the school's profile in a legal market 460 miles from Amherst.

"In places in New York State, people are very familiar with the Law School," Ittig said. "That is true also in Ohio, Pennsylvania, even in Toronto. I do not think it is as true down here, because even though we have had a number of graduates of extraordinary distinction down here, it has been an individual accomplishment, not necessarily connected with their association with the Law School."

"We are now looking at sponsoring conferences, seminars and programs to reach out to the legal community, so that when a student comes to Washington, their qualifications are apparent not just on an individual basis but be-

cause they are coming from a school that is known to have a great record.

"There is an awful lot that the school has been doing, and UB Law has many outstanding professors with high public profiles. So the first job is informational – to tell people who have not been connected with the Law School what is going on there."

Also, said Ittig, who served on the Dean's Advisory Council for many years and chaired that group for four years, the Washington, D.C., Leadership Board hopes to generate and test some ideas that might work just as well in other cities where there is a significant presence of UB Law alumni.

"We are hoping to try out some things that the DAC, as a national group, cannot do too well at a national level, but can be done at a regional level," she said. "We are hoping to invent and try out a number of ideas that might work well in other cities, so they can be replicated elsewhere."